# Specialist sexual harassment and discrimination law services

Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected at work. Our Equality Law Program delivers specialist services to help people who have experienceddiscrimination, including sexual harassment.

## About our services

Our lawyers have a strong commitment to helping people resolve their legal problems and get a fair outcome.

We take a **client-centred approach**, ensuring that we are responsive to each client’s unique experience of discrimination, including intersectional discrimination**.**

We will advise clients about all the options available to them and support them to respond in a way that best meets their interests and needs.

### We can help with

* discrimination complaints under State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination and employment law
* providing legal advice and assistance
* representation at conciliation, mediations and hearings
* conducting direct negotiations.

We also provide a specialist duty lawyer service for people who have a discrimination matter listed for a directions hearing at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

### We cannot help with

* general employment advice
* workers’ compensation claims
* defending complaints of discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation made against you.

## Expanded services

We have recently [expanded our sexual harassment law services](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/our-expanded-sexual-harassment-law-services-seeking-referrals-2023) to provide more assistance to workers experiencing sexual harassment.

Having recruited additional staff ready to deliver this service, we are now actively seeking client referrals.

## Eligibility for assistance

The eligibility criteria for accessing initial advice from a lawyer with discrimination law expertise is broad and we welcome referrals.

There are eligibility requirements for more intensive, ongoing legal services, which we are happy to discuss with the person referred to us, or with a worker assisting them.

## How we’ve helped with …

### Sexual harassment and victimisation at work

We assisted Jane\*, a teacher who was sexually assaulted at work and subjected to victimisation after lodging a claim at VCAT. We represented Jane at a mediation where her case settled for a significant amount of financial compensation while preserving Jane’s right to speak about her experiences, which was particularly important to her.

**Pregnancy discrimination at work**

We assisted Binh\*, who is a migrant worker who does not speak English, to resolve her pregnancy discrimination complaint at conciliation. Binh had been working as a casual employee at a factory for about a year when she became pregnant. During her third trimester she was told there was no more work for her because her belly was getting too big. Our lawyer helped Binh to navigate a complex legal claim involving the factory and her employer, a labour-hire provider, and resolve it quickly so Binh could focus on her new baby. Binh received financial compensation, an apology and a positive reference.

### Discrimination based on gender identity when receiving health services

We assisted Jem\*, a transgender client who experienced discrimination at a hospital emergency department when she sought medical treatment. Through direct negotiation with the hospital we were able to secure financial compensation for Jem and agreement by the hospital that it would implement anti-discrimination training for all employees.

\* Not their real names

## How to refer clients to our service

If you are working with a person who needs help dealing with discrimination or sexual harassment they have experienced, please use the [**referral form**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=gMe-9hPNzkmEx119lIIYecUu858_kf1KuRneTezvmJlUNEU5R0MwTThMWVFSR1pXWkREQUFWNFEwSi4u) (see next page).

We also have a **dedicated referral pathway for First Nations people**. Please use the referral form and email to **kali.wischmann@vla.vic.gov.au** and cc **equalitylaw@vla.vic.gov.au**.

Our team members have received training in relation to **cultural safety for First Nations people** and seek to provide services that are informed by our clients’ lived experiences.

## More information

If you want to know more about our services, please get in touch:

**equalitylaw@vla.vic.gov.au** or **(03) 9269 0416.**



[https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/specialist-sexual-harassment-and-discrimination-law-services)

## How your clients can get in touch directly

For free, confidential legal information about discrimination matters, people with a legal problem can first ring our Legal Help line 1300 792 387 or message our online [Legal Help Chat](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.legalaid.vic.gov.au%2Fspeak-to-us%23how-to-start-a-chat&data=05%7C01%7CJennifer.Arch%40vla.vic.gov.au%7Ccb7cb3416c9e478f263c08db08b1bbe8%7Cf6bec780cd1349ce84c75d7d94821879%7C1%7C0%7C638113331675867023%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2FNO%2B%2FGgnHSlbGsHNgX%2FhgMO3CnSuEbl1FR%2BrTX3yIxs%3D&reserved=0).

Help in another language: phone the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask to be put through to Victoria Legal Aid.

Help for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment: use the National Relay Service to phone Victoria Legal Aid on 1300 792 387. This is a free service.

## Referral form

*Copy and paste below into an email and send to* equalitylaw@vla.vic.gov.au. Please include:

* your name:
* DOB:
* address:
* contact number:
* email address:
* any language or other support needs:
* description of your legal problem:
* any urgency or time limits that may apply:

If you are making this referral on behalf of someone else, please also include:

* referrer name:
* referrer organisation:
* referrer contact number:
* referrer email: